

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans,

Recently, VA announced a locally led, community-driven model called **MyVA Communities**. Secretary McDonald recognized the need for a local community-based network that brings together local stakeholders, Servicemembers, Veterans, families and service providers to improve outcomes for the Veteran community. San Diego was the inspiration with a long-standing *One VA Community Advocacy Board* that has proven to be successful for over 20 years. When the model was first developed, Connecticut VA Leaders stepped up to the plate to spark an interest in their local community and inspired local community leaders to take on the challenge.

The first Public Forum for the Connecticut Community Veterans Engagement Board was held on August 27, 2015 in New Britain, CT. This forum was open to the public and VA hopes that these forums provide an opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard and contribute to their local community.

Now over 60 sites are moving forward to connect with local community leaders to start their own community veterans' engagement boards or leverage existing groups with a similar mission. Many Veteran advocacy groups currently exist and the goal is to integrate within those groups and where any gaps exist, encourage those groups to adopt the *MyVA Community* model.

These community veterans engagement boards are Co-chaired and driven by local community leaders and include representatives from all three VA Administrations on the board membership (VBA, VHA, and NCA). Public forums are an integral part of the model to encourage open communication, transparency, all-inclusivity, education, and networking.

We hope and expect that VBA will be actively engaged in these community efforts and continue to leverage the strengths of our Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI) as part of the *MyVA Community* Model.

As an individual living and working in the community, you may receive questions about *MyVA Communities*. You can visit the *MyVA Communities* webpage to view the *MyVA Community* Playbook and Toolkit, <http://www.va.gov/icbc/myVA.asp>, and send any questions via email to [MyVACommunities@va.gov](mailto:MyVACommunities@va.gov).

V/R

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**VA Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence ("I CARE")**

**Please Remember:**

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- If you would like to research, find, access, and, in time, manage your VA benefits and personal information please visit and/or register at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>.
- If you looking for a job or an employer committed to hiring Veterans, please register on the Veterans Employment Center™ (VEC) at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs>
- If you are seeking employment in the federal government, particularly the VA, our VA for Vets high-tech tools and resources can help. Visit online at <http://vaforvets.va.gov/> or call 1-855-824-8387.

If you would like to contact us about your VA education benefits:

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You can call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). This line only accepts calls from 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM central time Monday – Friday.